

Under the Rainbow: Oral Histories of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,
Transgender, Intersex and Queer People in Kansas

Jules Warrick
Oral History

Interviewed by
Tami Albin

July 7, 2008

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July 7, 2008

Jules Warrick: Narrator

Tami Albin: Interviewer

00:00:00

TAMI ALBIN: Okay so today is July 7, 2008 and I'm here with Jules. How are you doing?

00:00:06

JULES WARRICK: All right.

00:00:07

ALBIN: Excellent. Okay I'll start this off the way that I start off most of my oral histories which is tell me where you were born and when?

00:00:14

WARRICK: I was born in Denver, Colorado in 1964.

00:00:18

ALBIN: And so how long did you live in Denver for?

00:00:21

WARRICK: I lived in Denver until I was almost exactly fifteen, about a month shy of it. And then in 1979, which was when I was fourteen, I moved to Hays, Kansas. My parents had just gotten divorced and my mom's family was from Hays and so that's why we ended up there.

00:00:42

ALBIN: So what was life like growing up in Colorado?

00:00:45

WARRICK: Fine. Nice. No major bads or goods. There—well there were some rough spots which were the reason that my folks got divorced, but it was growing up in a big city. I definitely considered myself an urban kind of person, and so moving to Kansas was a little bit of a shock.

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00:01:17

ALBIN: So do you have siblings?

00:01:19

WARRICK: I do. I have three way older sisters. The youngest one before me was sixteen when I was born, so they were respectively like nineteen, eighteen and sixteen when I came along. So I didn't actually grow up with them. So I have siblings—I'm like an only child with sisters. (laughs)

00:01:41

ALBIN: Right. So when you were in school then your siblings were gone and out of the household at that point?

00:01:47

WARRICK: Absolutely. Yeah.

00:01:49

ALBIN: Okay so what was school like in Colorado?

00:01:52

WARRICK: Traumatic. Well you know it was junior high. I mean who likes junior high? It really kind of sucked. Elementary school was okay. It wasn't great but it was okay. But then, like I said, junior high was just pretty much the worst three years that I've ever gone through. I know a lot of people say that high school was terrible. I was like, High school was easy compared to junior high.

00:02:22

ALBIN: So what was it like then when you moved to Hays?

00:02:26

WARRICK: Smaller. (laughs) I was actually glad when we first moved because Denver was getting to be a bit of a chaos. Like I said, my folks were divorcing. And while there wasn't any really bad parts between them—it's not like they fought or anything like that, but I was glad to be out of Denver at that time. And so when I did get to Hays, at least for the first year, year-and-a-half, I was glad to be out of the chaos and craziness of city stuff but probably by the time I was a mid-junior in high school and certainly when I was

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senior I was kind of like, What the hell am I doing here? (laughs) It's like I really need to go somewhere else.

00:03:18

ALBIN: So where did you end up after high school?

00:03:21

WARRICK: Well I stayed in Hays, actually, for another three years. I spent my first three years of college at Fort Hays State. And it was fine. I really had a great time. I majored in theatre there. I was very much involved in the theatre. There was never any lacking for any kind of fun. Ironically of course it was like when I was the poorest in my life and things weren't always financially cool. And it's also when I started being a little bit more rebellious—to whom I'm not sure because when I started college actually my mom got remarried so I stayed at home and she left. And so I was still living in the same apartment where we had been living and didn't have much in the way of resources or finance. I had a job for a little while but even that was—and like I said then I started—oh I discovered Joan Jett and that was pretty much the changing point in my life, and then the rest of the music and stuff that came with that and punk and all that. So like I said I was rebellious but against what I don't know because it was—but at the same time, like I said, I was also very involved in the theatre and I loved that. So there was sort of this traditional side going on over here and this [makes noise] craziness on the other side.

00:05:00

ALBIN: So what did you specialize in with theatre?

00:05:02

WARRICK: Actually I liked the backstage stuff. I did set design—well not design, building, design classes but—built sets. Did just about everything you can do in theatre.

I was house manager, I ran lights, I acted some, I directed. So it was good time.

00:05:26

ALBIN: What about summer music camp?

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WARRICK: No.

00:05:32

ALBIN: Didn't do it?

00:05:32

WARRICK: Never involved in any—

00:05:33

ALBIN: No?

00:05:34

WARRICK: No kind of summer camp ever in my life.

00:05:37

ALBIN: Okay.

00:05:38

WARRICK: Lacking unfortunately. I've heard good stories from people but not ever a part of my deal.

00:05:44

ALBIN: Okay. So you were at Fort Hays for three years, and then where did you end up after that?

00:05:52

WARRICK: I came to the University of Kansas Lawrence. Going to back up a little bit. While I was in Hays I met fellow named Kevin. And—well actually previous to this I had sort of wondered about my sexuality. I had lots of gay male friends and I loved them but I never thought I was that way at all. In fact, one time somebody suggested that I was and I kind of freaked out. And so obviously that didn't go anywhere. And then I figured out—I started having feelings and crushes on unobtainable people. And then I didn't think that much about it. I met Kevin and he was a great guy. And he came out to school to KU, and so about a

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year later I followed him, and we got married. And we went to—well, we both kind of knew that we were gay before we got married but we were in love and so we acknowledged that we had these feelings but we wanted to be together so we got married and we did all that. Actually got married in a Catholic church.

00:07:23

ALBIN: So you had a Catholic ceremony?

00:07:24

WARRICK: We had a ceremony but not a Mass because he was not Catholic He was, in fact, Buddhist. But it was very sweet, actually, that he went ahead and said, Sure we can have it in your church whatever. And it was my family church in Hays. So it was kind of—I sort of did it for my mom. Actually—the preacher was actually kind of cool about it because when they talked to us about what religion are you, blah, blah, blah and he said Buddhist—when Kevin said Buddhist—the only thing he said was, How do you spell that? (laughs) He wasn't like, Oh my God you're going to burn in Hell or anything like that. He's like, Oh okay. He's writing it down. So yeah so we had the wedding, got married, moved back to Lawrence and in August of 1987 we went to China for—well ideally about a year—for study abroad. Kevin was studying Chinese and he knew enough and was able to get a study-abroad grant or scholarship or whatever. And I pretty much tagged along. I had not learned anything previous to that so I was going in completely blind. But it was fine. I went.

00:08:49

In this time—actually in the summer before—okay actually I want to back up a little bit more. About two weeks after we got married I was at a party in Hays with some friends and there was this woman there who was someone I was kind of interested in. And at a friend's get-together a few months previous to that we had sort of discussed, Would you ever be interested—? And she was a married woman too. She was married to another fellow. And, Would you ever be interested in like kissing another woman or anything like that? And she was like [makes noise] Maybe. (laughs) And so all that time we didn't really—I mean we didn't communicate a lot because we lived in two different towns and stuff. But then at this party we kind of well got to know each other a little better. (laughs) And there was also another mutual friend who also had feelings, and so we kind of just all talked about feelings and stuff like that. So I basically had my first

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experience with a woman two weeks after my wedding. So that was kind of fun.
(laughs)

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ALBIN: So how old were you when you got married?

00:10:09

WARRICK: I was twenty-three. Yeah. Way too young to know what the hell you were doing but—(laughs) So twenty-two, twenty-three, somewhere around in there. And then moving forward, like I say we went to China and in this time this woman that I had pretty much fallen in love with and I started writing back and forth. So there were many, many, many, many, many, many letters to and from China from both of us that we would go on for pages about basically anything but a whole lot of that, Oh I love you, I miss you, I would die without you, blah, blah, blah. It was very—and I have—I actually have both sets of the letters. Because when she and her husband were going through their divorce she didn't want him to get a hold of any of them so she gave my letters to her back to me. So—and actually not too long ago I had read through my letters to her because it was the twenty years since I had gone to China, I kind of wanted to get what some of my impressions were of that time twenty years ago and stuff. So oh man we went on and on, geez. You know you're twenty-three, four, you're just idealistic and just—it was kind of crazy actually, romantic crap. It was just—but wonderful at the same time.

00:11:45

ALBIN: Right.

00:11:46

WARRICK: It was very sweet because we were both each other's first female attraction. And so that's something that we'll both always have. And I'm also happy to say that we're still friends. That relationship—when I came back from China—I actually only stayed eight months and Kevin stayed the full year. Some of it was that I was just—I'd had enough. I was in love (laughs) with Teri and I just—I had—like I said, I was done with China at that time. And so I came home and like I said our relationship

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didn't actually last that long. We had a nice time together for a short time. But like I said, we're still friends and so I'm really grateful for that part.

00:12:44

ALBIN: So what did you do when you were in China besides tag along and—

00:12:48

WARRICK: Well I did take classes. I took first-year Chinese . There were a number of other Americans there and some other Europeans. And some of them also didn't really have very much background at all so we all kind of started at the beginning. And it was kind of cool. We lived in a foreign dorm basically. It was the foreign students' dorm. And so there was always—there were a lot of Japanese there. And it seems that a lot of times—of course everybody wanted to practice their Chinese so Chinese was sort of the default language but if there was trouble understanding someone it seemed like English was then the next default after (laughs) trying to work it through in Chinese. So that's for all the Europeans and Americans. But, went to classes, did some tour group kind of things. Because we were fairly organized in that whenever there was like near a holiday or something like that they always had a, Okay let's get all the foreign kids together and go off to the Ming Tombs and let's go to the Great Wall and stuff like that. So we did stuff like that. But then most of the time we were pretty much on our own. So a lot of people went to Beijing. This was in Tianjin, which is a city about eighty miles south of Beijing. So it was a couple of hours on the train. So people would go there every once in a while. Went to

Hong Kong, traveled around. It was really cool.

00:14:27

ALBIN: And so what was Kevin doing?

00:14:28

WARRICK: He was going to school. He was taking classes. Yeah.

00:14:37

ALBIN: Just pretty much taking classes?

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00:14:38

WARRICK: Yeah. Taking classes, doing the tours, meeting people. It was a little frustrating at the time because this was—well this was before Tiananmen Square happened in 1989 because this was 1987, '88 and things were much less western than they are now. And there was some frustration among at least a lot of the Americans in that they wanted to be able to meet more Chinese students of their peer group in like classes and do stuff like at the dorm. There were no Chinese allowed in our dorm. We could meet in the lobby or we could do stuff around like in the little café area that was there but no Chinese could come up to our rooms. So a lot of people were not very happy about that.

00:15:40

ALBIN: So what happened when you came back to the states?

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WARRICK: Well I tried to work things out together with Teri. Not so much—I think a lot of it was her husband, soon-to-be ex-husband, was causing more trouble than originally we had thought, because throughout all of our letters and everything it seemed like he was fine with it, he was cool.

00:16:10

ALBIN: So he knew?

00:16:11

WARRICK: He knew, yes. And of course Kevin knew. He was not surprised and was even encouraging of that and everything. But he—I think when he realized that we were actually falling in love he kind of freaked out. And so he caused some problems. And it was difficult for us to see each other. And I think that was part of why it didn't work. She actually lived in Manhattan at the time. And I was going back and forth between Hays and Lawrence because I wasn't really living anywhere. I was sort of just in between friends and my in-laws. And I would like to mention too as well, my in-laws were really cool. They did know that both Kevin and I were gay and were fine with it. They really just—or at least my mother-in-law. I was never really sure what my father-

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in-law—he didn't really say a lot. He may not have even really known. I'm not sure. But my mother-in-law at the time was—she was just really cool so—

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ALBIN: So she never at any point said, If you're both gay why don't you get divorced or anything like that?

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WARRICK: No.

00:17:26

ALBIN: Did anybody ever say that to you?

00:17:29

WARRICK: Not that I recall. But I'm sure if they did I would have told them to bugger off. I'd be like, No, we're happy doing our own thing. Actually I do have a cousin who was disapproving. And of course we had our rationale at the time; it's like, Well I'm with another woman and not a man and so it's okay. It's not anything I would say now for myself. I mean with other people it's whatever they do whatever. But it seemed to have—but it wasn't a problem.

00:18:08

ALBIN: So you're traveling back and forth. Things kind of aren't going well in the situation that you're in. And Kevin comes back. And so do you continue with school or—

00:18:19

WARRICK: Yeah. We both went back to KU, went back to school. Had a sad, alcoholic weekend getting over Teri then (laughs) realizing the fact that that didn't work and then it was like, oh okay well what's next? Kevin and I were together. I was very happy when he came home, and we just kind of picked up in Lawrence where we'd left off. He—this time, though, after we came back we started becoming more involved in—

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what at the time was GLSOK, the Gay and Lesbian Students—no—Gay and Lesbian Services of Kansas

00:19:04

ALBIN: Was that a KU organization?

00:19:06

WARRICK: Yeah, it was a KU group, student group primarily, although we did have a couple of people who were a little older and had been former members of like what is it, the Gay Liberation Front or something and they still liked being involved so they came around every once in a while. And so that was kind of my first taste of some political type stuff. When Kevin came back we both kind of got more into being—well activist is a little strong but (laughs) I started having my leanings. I started being more political, more feminist, more radical, just started getting more involved in just about anything. And actually it was pretty cool. Kevin, I think, was probably a feminist before I was so (laughs) he kind of helped me along with that one. I'm like, Oh yeah, okay, cool, yeah. (laughs) But let's see—but yeah we just went to school. We continued on with the group. There was some times when I felt a little more separatist. Or I liked the ideas of separatism. There was a bookstore here at the time called Spinsters, which was a women's bookstore and that's womyn with a "y." And I was working as a student at Watson

Library. And I met some people from there who were—well, Spinsters was a collective so nobody really owned it, they were sort of part owners of this and—and the bookstore was sort of on its last legs at this time. And so I volunteered to be there like on the weekends. So it wasn't a paid job or anything but it gave me access to learning new things and, like I said, separatism had an idea to it that I found attractive but it's just not very practical. But (laughs) it was a good learning experience. I'm really glad that I was around at that time even though things didn't—like I said, it was on its last legs then and it's a shame that there's not a resource like that now. But I think its time had probably come. But I met some good people through there, some people that I still know, sort of the old-towny lesbians now but—(laughs). And let's see—

00:21:58

ALBIN: You had mentioned earlier you discovered Joan Jett—

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00:22:03

WARRICK: (laughs)

00:22:04

ALBIN: —and then the punk scene and you were like—and you had said that was kind of it. Can you talk about what that means? So we're talking like Joan Jett and the Runaways?

00:22:13

WARRICK: Well the Blackhearts at the time. I discovered the Runaways sort of in the process of liking—yeah; I can almost tell you the exact day that I discovered Joan. I do know that it was in January of 1983. And I had previously not been into rock music at all. I was a band geek. I liked musicals. I was a gay man really. I just—I'd listen to Casey Kasem's Top 40. And that was pretty much my exposure to—I mean I liked listening to the Top 40 and I kept my little lists and everything, but I wasn't really into that kind of music. I mean it was like—I don't know. And I remember hearing the song, "I Love Rock 'n Roll". And I'm like, Oh I hate this punk stuff; it's ruining music, blah, blah, blah and everything. (laughs) And I was like, It's terrible. But then something happened. I had—I guess I must have previously heard it as they were doing the end-of-the-year countdown or something and I was actually in Colorado at the time visiting some family. And I woke up one day and I said, "Joan Jett is God." And I pretty much never looked back since. It completely changed my life. I remember when she—the Runaways—well Lou Reed wrote the song but the Runaways covered a song called "Rock 'n Roll" and it was like, my life was saved by "Rock and Roll". It absolutely was. That was—it was just amazing. I became much more assertive, independent, more conscious of a lot of things around me. Just—it really was just a transformation. Now some of it is that I was in college. I can kind of look back now and say, well yeah I was twenty—nineteen, twenty so of course some things are going to be changing for me. But it really was, that was definitely the catalyst. And without that, who knows how much longer it would have taken. But yeah and I still kind of think that. I've mellowed a little bit but I do have a black heart tattooed over my heart. So, Joan's it man.

00:24:36

ALBIN: That's interesting. So now we're at like say—so Spinsters was like '89?

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00:24:46

WARRICK: '89—'88, '89 somewhere in there. I worked—like I had mentioned, I worked at Watson Library as a student and there I met my wife. She was dating someone else at the time, someone who worked at the library. So everybody meets at the library. It's like the place. It's just—and I knew that this other woman, Gina, was a lesbian and so I was kind of like, Hey someone else in the library, oh my God, cool. And so we all hung out together for a while. We used to go over to Topeka to go dancing because there's no place in Lawrence to do that. And it was pretty much a regular weekend occurrence. So there was probably like four or five months where we did that like every Saturday night, which is really pretty cool. I mean it's too bad there's nothing like that around here, but—so we were hanging out all together and in the course of that Roberta and I kind of decided that we liked each other, kind of maybe more than she should while dating someone else. (laughs) And eventually they had their discussion and broke things off.

00:26:10

And then in August we decided to start seeing each other exclusively. I was at the time still married so exclusive being relative. (laughs) But at this time Kevin had also pretty much decided that he was just gay. So even though we were living together and being husband and wife, we were not being intimate other than like your best friend kind of hugging, kissing kind of thing. And that had been going on for maybe six or eight months or so. So by the time Roberta came along it wasn't anything other than, This is my friend, Kevin who I happen to be married to. But—unfortunately, they didn't get to know each other very well and I think she kind of regrets that now. In, I guess it was January or so of 1990 Kevin decided to go to school at the University of Indiana in Bloomington and—to study Mongolian now.

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ALBIN: The language or—

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WARRICK: Mongolia the language and everything. He'd started at KU in Russian and then started Chinese and then was going on to Mongolian. If it had an Arabic-based alphabet he just wasn't interested. He just—(laughs) It has to have a different script and—so he moved to Indiana and I stayed in Lawrence. And so that was pretty much

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our separation. We didn't actually divorce until about 1995 mostly for—well previous to that we couldn't afford it. Divorce is expensive and we didn't have any money, neither of us did. But in '91 or so he was diagnosed as HIV positive. And so he lived with that for a while. But in early to mid-'95 he knew he was getting sicker and so we decided to get divorced, like I said, mostly for legal reasons and he didn't want me to get stuck with anything that would be his financial responsibility. So there was a while where he and the fellow he was dating lived in Kansas City so I got to see him once in a while—again, not as much as it would have been nice to. Because at the time neither of us had a car—well neither Roberta or I had a car. And they had one but they didn't come to Lawrence very often. So we made it over every once in a while. And then he moved to Portland. They moved to Portland together but then almost immediately the guy he was seeing just split. And that's also when Kevin's health was starting to fail. So he was—they found a hospice for him and his mom went out and took care of him and—I'm going to get a little emotional now because I always do. He's been gone for like twelve years and I still—he—I got to go out and see him in October and he passed away in November. Um—sorry. He was about two months short of being thirty. So it kind of sucks that we had all this stuff to go through and he never got to be here for it. Jesus. Kind of worst than usual sometimes. Sometimes there's like, "Oh yeah that's my dead, gay ex-husband." I said that to someone one time and they were just like, "What? You're—" Someone who had no idea that I was even married. And it's like, "You're—all that information at once?" I'm like, "What?" It's the best way to describe him, dead, gay, ex-husband. So okay, I'm okay now.

00:30:46

ALBIN: Okay.

00:30:48

WARRICK: Like I said, it's been twelve years, coming up on thirteen, and I still miss him. So—anyway, so Roberta was certainly very supportive through all of that. We—like I said, we stayed together while Kevin was in Indiana and back and forth in Kansas City and just was living life and doing our thing. In 1992 after three years of being together we got married, had our first—at the time of course we called it a commitment ceremony because that's what you do when you're not straight is you have a commitment ceremony. And—nothing fancy. Like I said, we couldn't really afford it because (laughs) who had money then? So we got married in our apartment. We had

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a friend of ours who officiated. And this was before Internet kind of stuff, before you could get your online thing. But I think she did do it through like the Rolling Stone or something like that and she got her official—well I mean she's legal with the state and everything like that. It was kind of funny. I was like, Yeah so—

00:32:07

ALBIN: You mean like one of those little ads in the back?

00:32:08

WARRICK: Yeah—

00:32:09

ALBIN: Those little tiny ads?

00:32:10

WARRICK: (laughs) Exactly.

00:32:11

ALBIN: Self-addressed envelope to—

00:32:12

WARRICK: That's right. Get your ordination. Become—marry your friends or whatever. So we had our ceremony in '92. So we celebrate two anniversaries—our getting together anniversary which is in August, and our wedding anniversary which is in October. And I think—I think one of the things that we really did right was that we dated for about a year-and-a-half before we moved in together, which is unheard of in lesbian relationships. (laughs) But (laughs) some of that was convenience because I mean part of it was I was still living with Kevin and she was still living with Gina for at least six or eight months of that. So—but we dated for that and then we lived together for about a year-and-a-half before we got married.

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So I think that's probably really helped with keeping things steady and on a pretty even keel, although there was a period for about two years where we were separated. She calls it her crazy time. She just kind of went nuts (laughs). I'm still not even sure

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exactly what the catalyst was. She had just decided that she wasn't a lesbian and being married to a woman sort of made that not really work. And so I just wanted her to be happy so I was like, Oh well okay. We didn't move apart. We still lived together. We were still domestic partners in that way. I sort of not exactly tried to date anyone. Because I didn't—I mean for all intents and purposes that was it, and we just couldn't bring ourselves together to move apart at that time but there was no indication that status would change. And so I kind of was really depressed and so yeah, (laughs) understandably. And also at this time I was—had started really getting involved with the fandom of *Xena*. And so I had a lot of online friends and that's probably a lot of what got me through is I did meet some people and I went to like five or six conventions in like this two- or three-year span, which was fabulous. I met some really great people. There was one woman that I was kind of interested in. We kind of—nothing ever really came of it. We were close for a while but we—it was long distance already so it was kind of like, No this isn't going to work and besides, I'm not going to fall in love with you. So it was fun to fool around for a while but there was no commitment in any kind of way. And then about two years later in 2000 Roberta was like, So you want to date? I was like, You mean you? (laughs) Yes. I mean, it was sort of my sarcastic answer. But it was like, Sure, yeah let's do that. And so we did actually. We just—I mean, like I said even though we were still living together we kind of dated for a little bit. And then in about a month or so we were kind of like, Okay, let's just—let's—whatever this foolishness was let's just get over that and be together. And so ever since then we have counted all of our years together continuously. Because we figure if we could make it through the separation we still get to count those years. So—

00:36:26

ALBIN: Right. Right. So what was the obsession with *Xena*?

00:36:30

WARRICK: How do you explain that one?

00:36:34

ALBIN: It happened to a lot of people.

00:36:35

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WARRICK: It happened to a lot of people. I just—it was the right thing at the right time, I think. Actually” it took me about a year. I knew that it had been on. I never watched it. I had some other friends who said, Oh man you should see the show. You would really love it. And I was like, I don’t know. It’s so—I’d seen like a little bit of it and I’m like, This one chick’s name is Gabrielle and that’s not ancient Greek and they just—they’re mixing timelines and it’s ridiculous and it’s just stupid and I’m not going to watch that. But there’s hot chicks. I’m like, Whatever. And then (laughs) there was—during the summer reruns of the first season I saw the—where I was house sitting somewhere and it was on and I was like, Wow, the episode ‘Callisto’. So (laughs) I was like, This is actually kind of good really. And then since it was in syndication it came on again like three days later on the weekend or something like that. And I told Roberta, I’m like, You have to watch this show. This is really cool. And the next one we taped, with commercials because we were like, Well we’ll just see what happens. And then after that I taped every single one of them without commercials. I edit them, every one, up until the last season and then of course I bought all the DVDs. But you know it just—like I said, it was the right thing at the right time. I got a computer basically because of it. There was a couple of people here in town who were really into it and so like we would get together and talk about stuff and she was already online. She was like, “Oh you have to get on this mailing list.” And at the time it was—I think it was Xenaverse. And I did, I joined a couple of mailing lists and it was just—I think the Internet really helped it at the time because it was this new booming thing in ’96, ’97 and that was sort of the second or third season of the show. And so it just—things just really took off and it just—I mean of course it has a huge lesbian following. And there’s five or six gay men who like it. (laughs) (whispering) And there’s even straight people who like it. I have friends like that. But I don’t know, it was this amazing thing.

00:38:55

ALBIN: What were the conventions like?

00:38:58

WARRICK: A lot of fun actually. I went to—the one big one that I went to what they call like the big one in LA, the Pasadena, Burbank one. The only year that I went to that one was the only year that neither Lucy Lawless or Renee O’Connor went to. I know. My timing was so off. I had a great time with my friends and everything like that. But the cool part is in ’97, I think, I went to the San Francisco convention which we call the

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O'Conn Con because it was the second one that Renee O'Connor had ever done. She had done one somewhere back east like a month before and so this was like her second one ever. And so it was really seeing what the fans are like and up to. And that was pretty amazing. I got her autograph. It was back when they still did that kind of thing and they didn't charge for it. Now it's gotten absolutely ridiculous. I don't know how anyone can afford to go to the conventions anymore because there's not even like a general admission. It's just ridiculous. But at the time it was really cool. So that one was obviously a lot of fun because I met Renee O'Connor, oh my God. (laughs) And then other ones were really a lot about seeing friends and occasionally seeing the guest stars. I've seen Danielle Cormack, who was Ephiny and Kevin Smith, Ares, before he passed on, and oh a couple other people—Claire Stansfield played Alti and Ted Raimi, whatever.

00:40:46

ALBIN: He's Joxer, right?

00:40:47

WARRICK: Yeah. He was there, yes, I've seen him. And some other sort of the peripheral characters too. I mean it was cool to see them. But I did see Michael Hurst at the Renee O'Connor one. Michael Hurst was also there which was really cool, and his wife Jennifer Ward-Lealand, who later was in a *Xena* episode as Bodicea or Boudicca depending on whichever—

00:41:15

ALBIN: Yeah, wherever you're located. Yeah I've heard it pronounced so many different ways. And I've also heard like Bodica.

00:41:21

WARRICK: Bodica, yeah. That's where we get that. So—but it was really cool to see him because he was really quite amazing. The people who only know him from *Hercules* are really missing out because he's a fabulous Shakespearean actor for one but then he just—other stuff too he's just wow. So—and then there were a few where I dressed up in my little Amazon outfit and I met Hudson Leick, the one who played Callisto. I have a picture with her of my arms around her. I was like (makes noise) (laughs) She was like, Say—(laughs) like uh, hi. (laughs) So, yeah conventions are

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great things, *Xena* is a great thing. It was a good community thing. Like I said, there was—I am sure there are straight people who are really into it but pretty much everyone that I knew was a lesbian, a couple gay men. That was what was cool about the community part of it. And the traveling around too was cool because I've been to Minneapolis and San Francisco and Orlando a couple of times.

00:42:38

ALBIN: So are there any other shows that you—like conventions that you go to for other shows now or—

00:42:44

WARRICK: No, no I haven't actually. There's—Kansas City has an annual Comicon that I've gone to a couple of times, which is kind of fun. It's not really as big a deal—one year I went. Terry Moore who did *Strangers in Paradise*, which is a fabulous comic, graphic novel, whatever (laughs) you want to call it. The first time I went, I went to see him and so that was really cool. But no—and there's like some other sci-fi kind of ones in Kansas City but I haven't really—I would love to go to a Trek convention or one of those sci-fi where they have some of the guest stars, just to see what it was like, to go to one of the big ones where people are really dressed in costume and they're just insane.

00:43:31

ALBIN: Only talking Klingon and—

00:43:32

WARRICK: Exactly, yeah. I have a friend who I think is going to Dragon Con this year which is in Atlanta that happens every year. And it's kind of a—it's an all-over-the-place fandom kind of thing, and it's pretty cool. It would be awesome to see that sometime but I have to win the lottery first.

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ALBIN: Yeah. I imagine you would drop a lot of cash at an event like that.

00:43:55

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WARRICK: Yeah—

00:43:56

ALBIN: —for like a variety of things that you may or may not need but just want.

00:44:01

WARRICK: I really need this sword. I don't know what I'm going to do with it but—and this laser blaster that's not real—and—

00:44:11

ALBIN: And this Klingon forehead.

00:44:12

WARRICK: Yeah see.

00:44:13

ALBIN: Yeah. Oh that's funny. That's really funny. So were you still a student worker at Watson during all of this or—

00:44:20

WARRICK: Let's see. No, not the whole time. I was a student worker until oh actually like '93 and then graduated. And then I worked for—I still worked for the university but I was like full-time staff at the Burge Union and—in food service, yea. Don't want to really do that again. It was okay. It wasn't the worst thing. I mean, it certainly wasn't like waiting. I would never be a wait person because I would kill someone probably. But it was like prep and flipping burgers and stuff like that. It was fine but not really anything I'd want to do again. But that was like five years. And then I worked for the city for about four years and eleven months (laughs) in parking control which really sucked

00:45:15

ALBIN: Yeah.

00:45:16

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WARRICK: There were good parts. I got to be outside when it was nice but I also had to be outside when it was freezing and really, really hot. And I got a lot of good exercise, had a great tan.

00:45:27

ALBIN: Did people ever verbally abuse you?

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WARRICK: All the time, which is one of the reasons that I quit, because when someone threatened my life I was like, I've had enough of this. And Roberta's like, You've had enough of this. So it wasn't a direct threat but it was enough of a threat that I was like, Bye, I'm leaving. So—but the good part about that was—this is really when I was into my *Xena* obsession. It was also part of the time when Roberta and I were separated so my mind wandered freely. I have written so many stories in my head that you can't even imagine. It would fill volumes. It would fill half a library (laughs) at least. My mind got to wander and I wish I'd written some of this stuff down. Not that it would necessarily be any good but it would have been like, Oh man that was a great idea. I should have at least done something with that. So that was a good part of that job that I could kind of just zone out and—but then like I said that was almost five years and then in 2000 I got—I had a friend—actually it was Gina, the previous Gina who had worked at Watson Library before worked for human resources in Topeka. And she said, So there's a job opening at the library where—the boss of what you used to do. Would you be interested, or you might want to look for this. And so I applied and ta-da (laughs) I still knew people that I had previously worked with or for and I guess I either interviewed well or they liked me, (laughs) one or the other. They were just like, Yes come back. So it's been like eight years and a couple of months since—that I got the best job in the world. And it really was my dream job. It was absolutely what I wanted to do.

00:47:37

ALBIN: So what about it is it that makes it your dream job?

00:47:41

WARRICK: It's the library, (laughs) the best place in the world. I'm in the library. I'm in the stacks. I'm what I consider sort of the working class of the library basically. I like being support staff. I love librarians and I love all of the administration and the stuff that

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makes the other stuff happen. But I don't want the degree. I don't want to do the extra work to do anything different than what I'm doing. I like the—like I said the working aspect of what I do. There are obviously frustrating bits about it because you're never completely as organized as you want to be. (laughs) And that was part of the main attraction for me is that I have this sort of Virgo-anal-retentive-must-be-this-way kind of organization thing about me, sort of mixed in with whatever. (laughs) So for me it was perfect. And when this job opportunity came up I was just like, Yes. And I'm happy that it's been eight years. It's the longest I've ever had any one continuous job. Not that the—well yeah some of them were actually pretty bad but I'm happy to have been here that long and it passed in almost nothing. I was like, What? Eight years? What? Cool. I'm glad I started in 2000 so I'll always know like how long I've been there. I don't even have to think. It's like, What year is it? Oh okay. (laughs)

00:49:33

ALBIN: So um—I had a follow-up question to your job. I can't remember quite what it was, has left my brain. What—what do you see your future as in Kansas? Will you always stay in the position you're—do you think this is the job for life or—

00:49:53

WARRICK: Well—

00:49:55

ALBIN: Kansas is the place it'll be or—

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WARRICK: It's hard to say. My wife is presently a grad student and an intern working in the library oddly enough and she will be graduating in May. And if everything worked out perfectly then yes we would stay here for a while. We just this year bought our first house. So we're very excited about staying here. If things worked out perfectly yes, then she would get a job somewhere here and we would live happily ever after, at least for a very long time if not ever after. But a lot of it is contingent on what she can find. I love my job and I love being here but I am willing to follow her wherever it is that we can get something. If things could be fabulous and she had \$100+ thousand job a year and

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she could just keep me that would be wonderful. That's probably not going to happen. (laughs) Something tells me, hmm. So probably wherever we went, if we went somewhere else, then it would have to be that we could both find something to work. But we love Kansas, we love Lawrence especially. And I like a lot of other places. I like Minneapolis, I love Chicago, I still love Denver. But even the other places I would go to are still kind of Midwest. When I was in my early years of college and stuck in Hays I wanted to go to New York City, that was the place. But that never came to be and that's not a place that was even on my long list now. My absolute dream list of course is London. (laughs) I'd be like, Let's both just work at the British Library and everything will be perfect. But in the meantime (laughs) we're still in Kansas and—where we'd like to stay in the Lawrence area. I think it would be very difficult to live in other places in Kansas. Not just for being queer. I mean that's a big part of it, but—because there's community everywhere, obviously. But a lot of it is the other political reasons and the oh smallness of some of the other places. Even Wichita, which is a bigger city, I just—I've never found it appealing that much. Granted, I haven't seen that much of it. The little bit I've seen has been okay but I don't know enough to judge but from what I do know I'm kind of like, I'll stay here, that's fine.

00:53:13

ALBIN: One thing that you haven't discussed is how did your parents react to—you're married to a gay man—

00:53:22

WARRICK: Yeah (laughs)—

00:53:23

ALBIN: —and you have kind of realized that you're gay and then you have a female partner. So at what point did you say anything to your parents or did you?

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WARRICK: Well actually Roberta and I had been together for quite a while before I said anything to my mom. I think—I was trying to remember this actually. I'm pretty sure that she knew why Kevin and I were getting divorced. I'm not entirely sure that I necessarily said, Well he's gay and so am I or something. It wasn't as easy as coming

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out to his mom. My mom's a little more Catholic and small town. And so I'm not entirely sure how I dealt with that part. I do know that I came out to her and I was like, Mom this is just kind of the way it is. This is Roberta and this is who I'm going to be with for the rest of time. And she was not terribly happy about it but she didn't freak out really. She was like, Huh. All right. And the only time that we've ever really argued about it was a few years ago I was out visiting and actually one of my other sisters was there too.

00:54:56

And my sisters have been very supportive. They have not had any problem whatsoever. They love Roberta and—they're ex-hippies. They're all just kind of liberal and cool and—well one of them's Canadian so (laughs) that's some extra points there. But I was talking to my mom and I said something about being married and blah, blah, blah. And my mom was like, Well you're not married, or you can't get married. I'm like, Mom we've been married for like six years at this point or something like that. And she was like, It's just not marriage and this and that and blah, blah, blah, blah. It's like it's the only time that I think my mom's ever made me cry. I'm like, Are you kidding me? What—ah—I'm glad my sister was there so, I mean, that was kind of nice. Because she was just like, Mom cut it out. She's just as married as Chet and I are. So mom didn't really win that argument. But I mean it's just that she was being stubborn. But as far as like just coming out, she was just kind of like, Oh whatever. Or I just said it so matter-of-factly that—there wasn't like a sit-down, Mom, I have something to tell you. It was like, 'We're together and this is the way it is. And since I don't live—I'm the only one who still lives in Kansas so I am closer to her—we don't necessarily see each other that much that we have to live with each other in that same kind of way. So—and like I said, she loves Roberta and so it's—she's okay with that. She just doesn't like the idea that we're married

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And I do remember writing to my dad. And of course this was after they had been divorced and everything. And I wrote to him but I never got an answer back. And then not long after that is when I found out that he had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. And so I don't ever know—I don't know what his reaction ever was to that. He may not have registered it or anything. And my oldest sister, who was kind of his caretaker for

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his last years, never said anything. And it was also, like I said, fairly early on so it may have been just a letter he read and then tossed. So I don't

know.

00:57:31

ALBIN: So do you think now that there's gay marriage in California, do you ever think you'll go to California and get married or will you wait until it comes to Kansas or whatever state you might be living in?

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WARRICK: Actually I was in Berkeley the day that it was announced.

00:57:48

ALBIN: Really?

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WARRICK: Yeah. My niece was graduating from Berkeley the next day and she has some friends who were pretty excited about—matter of fact they texted her. They were just like, guess what, the Supreme Court blah, blah, blah. So it was very exciting there at the time because everything on the news was just like, Wow this is blah, blah, blah. And almost the day after (laughs)—it was like the day after I came home or in the next week or so Roberta and I started talking about it. So yeah we would, absolutely. We—I've gotten in contact with an old friend of mine, which has been really good because it's someone I've been meaning to write to for a long time and I just haven't and now I have and so it's very exciting that we're back in touch. One of my oldest friends in the world, we actually dated when we were in high school. And of course every boy that I liked was gay, so he was my first gay friend. (laughs) But it's been nice getting in touch with him. And so if/when we go and do this then I'll get to see him and that'll be a really nice thing, and we'll probably get to stay with him which will be a really nice thing. (laughs) And he and his husband are talking about getting officially married too. I mean they've been together for twenty years or whatever and so they would like to—they're covered under the domestic partnership for the state but they would like to have the marriage license and everything too. So we talked about doing it almost immediately. And then we have decided to wait a little bit and do it closer to one of our anniversaries—either

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the get-together or the wedding one. I wish I knew how it was going to be in November when they put it to a public vote. It's California so you hope that it's going to be cool, but—

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ALBIN: But there's been quite a backlash in California.

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WARRICK: I was going to say but then they nominated the governor so (laughs) big ass Republican. So I would like to think that people are smarter than that but Kansas has certainly proved me wrong on that one so—and that was probably one of the most depressing days that we have experienced in a long time. I can't remember when it was. It was in 2004—

01:00:21

ALBIN: Yes—

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WARRICK: And Kansas passed the no-we-don't-want-queers-to-get-married act. And I swear Roberta wore black for a month. It just—it was—I was like, Wow thanks a lot.

01:00:42

ALBIN: Do you think that pissed off a lot of GLBT people in Kansas?

01:00:42

WARRICK: Yeah. I sure hope so. I mean I'm sure no one was surprised, honestly. I'm sure that people were expecting it. But nonetheless it still sucks that they just went ahead and proved us right.

01:00:59

ALBIN: So do you— so have you seen the politics in Kansas? I mean you've lived here for so long. Have you seen the politics change, I guess politics towards GLBT issues? Have you seen them change in a positive way or have you seen them change at all?

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01:01:17

WARRICK: Well, I think there have been some small changes here and there in some smaller ways like adding sexual orientation to the city charter or whatever, to say we are not going to discriminate based on sex, race, creed, sexual orientation, that kind of thing. I think Topeka finally added that and maybe Wichi—no, okay maybe not. (laughs) But they've talked about it. So I mean that's at least a start. And equality—Kansas Equality or I don't know—

01:02:04

ALBIN: Coalition?

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WARRICK: Coalition. Yeah there have been several of them. (laughs) Someone I knew was one of the first people who kind of started getting that going, so it's kind of changed names since then. But the fact that they have been around a long time and have been constantly keeping this under the legislature's nose and the governor and everybody else, I think it's a plus. I don't think that it's very positive as a whole—for the whole state. I still think it's kind of stuck in the mud. But in small ways I think it's starting. I mean because people are just pissed. We've had enough of it and it's like, You know what, we live here too and we're paying taxes and all I have to show for it is nothing basically. Matter of fact when we—when that we-won't-let-you-get-married-act passed Roberta and I made up some T-Shirts that were like—because we were talking. We were like walking home from work one day and we were just talking. We were like, if we hold so much power in the state—I mean obviously we're such a threat that they don't want us to get married or have equal rights or anything like that—then you would really think that we would be just in control, we would have all this money and all this power and we would just be controlling the entire state. And yet all I have to show for it is this lousy T-Shirt. So no.

01:03:56

ALBIN: What about at KU? Because you were like part of one of the earlier—kind of the post gay-liberation front organization. What changes have you seen happen at the university?

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Are the students more political now or less political?

01:04:12

WARRICK: I think it kind of goes in waves. I think there were some times when I was involved that there were some very political things. There was a time when we did a number of protests because of the military policy. There was the conflict between the university saying, we don't discriminate and we don't allow discrimination and yet ROTC was still allowed to exist and they have the U.S. policy of no gays in the military and blah, blah, blah. So there were a lot of protests and a lot of marching into Strong Hall and making noise and Angela Davis came to speak. It wasn't related to that but it was at that time and so that just really empowered a lot of people and we were just—let's take over the chancellor's house and blah, blah, blah. And so that was a very exciting time. And it coincided with some other gay stuff that we were up in arms about too. And so the '89, '90, somewhere around in there it was very exciting. And then there's been kind of a lull. And also there was a time when I was away from the university and so I don't know necessarily what all went on at least politically. But it seemed like it was pretty quiet. I don't know that there was anything in particular. There's always Pride week. When I was in school it was called GALA week, which was Gay and Lesbian Awareness. And then it turned into Pride and it's—I mean people just know what that means now so they don't have to explain it to anyone. (laughs) And I think that's always—I think that kind of stirs people up and makes them realize that there are some political sides to things and it's not just the fun. I mean the Brown Bag Drag is fabulous but there's more to everything than the frivolous so—

01:06:21

ALBIN: Right. So is there anything I haven't asked that you wanted to talk about? I think I've covered everything.

01:06:28

WARRICK: I think mostly. I do want to say, because I was thinking on my drive over here. I'm like, Okay what's my coming out story? (laughs) I never really have a direct coming out story. It wasn't just like, Ding. Although I was thinking about when I was in my first year of college—and this is before Joan Jett, so I was still kind of a little meek and a little—not sure what was going on. I had a friend who was actually a friend from

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high school but she was also at college now too. And there was some theatre cast party or something like that. And she had given me a ride home and something had happened, she needed a Band-Aid or whatever and I was like, Well come on over to my place. You're giving me a ride home anyway. We'll patch you up and then you can go off and party some more or whatever. And she dropped me off. She was like, Okay I'll see you later. And she gave me a kiss on the lips. It was absolutely nothing to her. I'd never had any feelings about her. She was my first friend in school, in Hays, and so we were always friends. And there was no attraction or anything there but it rocked my world. (laughs) I was like, Oh my God. It never really even occurred to me before then. It was just like, Huh, what's that all about? This is an interesting feeling. Hmm. And then I didn't think about it for while. I was like, Huh? But I do remember that later—and this is before I met Kevin—it was almost like within a month of meeting Kevin or something like that. But I was just like—I didn't know anybody. I was kind of getting desperate. I was like, Do I—is there anyone? And so I asked the same friend. I'm like, So do you know any (whispering) lesbians? And she was like, Well, yeah. And she was—I mean she did. She knew people from all over the place because she was sort of the wild child at the time. She's a Methodist minister now. But—(laughs) college. And she's like, Yeah but I don't really want to introduce you to them. And I was like, Why? She's like, They're just not—you know they kind of swap a lot. She's like, They're—every few months they just kind of trade off and it's all the jocks, all the girls over in softball and stuff like that. And I was like, Oh. And it was the first time I'd heard that stereotype. So I was like, Oh. So it wasn't that she didn't want to introduce me to any lesbians, she didn't want to introduce me to them. I was like, Ooh.

01:09:10

ALBIN: So was there a big community? Was there a—

01:09:12

WARRICK: Not that I knew of at all. Clueless. Even when I went—had visited back there and especially the time in between waiting for Kevin to come home, between Lawrence and Hays, I had a friend who was involved and so I found out that there was really much more of a community that I would have ever known. But it was one of those that if you didn't know someone who knew someone you would never have known.

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01:09:43

ALBIN: Right.

01:09:43

WARRICK: So—

01:09:44

ALBIN: That's interesting.

01:09:45

WARRICK: Yeah.

01:09:52

ALBIN: So you were saying that your mom is Catholic and you had a Catholic ceremony but you didn't have a Mass.

01:09:52

WARRICK: Right.

01:09:53

ALBIN: So were you raised as a Catholic, like a—

01:09:55

WARRICK: I was kind of. When I was a kid my parents weren't really all that religious. So we went to church once in a while. But I had an aunt and uncle who lived in Boulder and they were very, very Catholic. And so whenever I went to visit them we went to church on Sunday and there was dressing up and everything. And I loved it. I thought—I mean it was structure. And I really liked that and I really liked being Catholic. I thought it was really cool. And then I came home and there wasn't that and like I said occasionally we'd go and I liked that. And then when I was in high school, I was really, really religious. I went to church every Sunday without fail. During the Holy Week, you know the week before Easter between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, I was in church every day. I took off school on Good Friday and stayed in church for three hours. Some people just took the time off and went and farted

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around. But yeah I was very, very, very Catholic. And loved it. I didn't want to be like everyone else. That was part of my weirdness. That was kind of what—I've always been odd. (laughs) Let's just—let's be honest. I've just always been a bit hmm, you know. And to me that was sort of my rebellion in a way was to just be really good. And then like I said, then college happened and—

01:11:37

ALBIN: And so did that cause a conflict at all of any sort, like an internal conflict? Because I've interviewed a lot of people who religion has played a very strong role in their life and—

01:11:48

WARRICK: Um-hmm. Well I thought about that and it never really did cause a conflict. I didn't— because one, I didn't have those feelings yet. I didn't have—I didn't have any sexuality. I was nothing until almost the time I came out. I just—I didn't even think of it. And some of that may have been repression just from being Catholic. But I didn't think of anything really. And when I started not going to church so much it was more my sort of rebellion against everything else. It was like sort of the Joan Jettness coming in. And I didn't go to church every week and I didn't miss it. I was like, Huh. And the less I went the less I—or the more I didn't miss it or however that makes sense. And then I started sort of finding out other things like that they're just not really cool about women. And it was really more that. It was sort of going against my feminist grain, that their treatment and attitude towards women is what set me off. And then there was the whole gay thing. And I was like, Well that's just not cool. And so I was just like, Screw you guys. I'm going home. I just—so the conflict didn't come from being queer, it was just—it didn't really have a place in my life anymore.

01:13:22

ALBIN: And does it anymore?

01:13:23

WARRICK: No, absolutely not.

01:13:27

ALBIN: Right, okay.

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01:13:28

WARRICK: Other than they're kind of crazy but—that's fine. That's just my opinion. I know there are lots of gay Christians. I don't quite understand it but okay.

01:13:38

ALBIN: Right. Right. Okay well I don't think I have any more questions and I thank you so much for your time.

01:13:45

WARRICK: Absolutely. Thank you—

01:13:47

ALBIN: I appreciate it.

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WARRICK: —for doing this. This is just the most amazing thing.

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ALBIN: It's been a lot of fun.

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WARRICK: Yeah. And it's been a long time coming. And thank you for doing it. The whole state should thank you.

01:14:01

ALBIN: (laughs)

01:14:02

WARRICK: They should. The governor should write to you and say, Thank you from the State of Kansas.

01:14:04

ALBIN: Maybe I could get one of those pens with their name on it.

01:14:07

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WARRICK: There (laughs) you go, see.

01:14:08

ALBIN: That would be so sweet—

01:14:08

WARRICK: That'd be awesome.

01:14:10

ALBIN: All righty, thank you.

01:14:11

WARRICK: Thank you.

[end]

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